WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for the contactless recognition of an object in a monitored region comprising illuminating the object with coherent light and evaluating light reflected by the object by employing an interference pattern.

2. A method according to claim 2 including directing the coherent light through at least one of a beam splitter, a collimator and an optical system.

3. A method according to claim 1 including generating the interference pattern with the coherent light and the light reflected by the object, and comparing the interference pattern with a desired interference pattern.

4. A method according to claim 3 including providing the coherent light illuminating the object from one of a separate coherent light source and a beam splitter which diverts a portion of the coherent beam from the light source.

5. A method according to claim 1 including superimposing the reflected light over a desired interference pattern to thereby generate diffracted light, and measuring an intensity of the diffracted light.